Preparation for Exchange

I. Why Glasgow?

When perusing SFU's long list of exchange partner destinations, I settled on the University of Glasgow for five reasons. Firstly, my paternal grandmother was born in Glasgow, so a part of me felt like I was rediscovering my roots by going there. Secondly, UofG was founded in 1451, making it the fourth oldest university in the English-speaking world; and the pictures don't lie - the campus really does look like Hogwarts! Thirdly, Scotland is an English-speaking country, which appealed to me as a monolingual English speaker who was intimidated enough by the prospect of moving abroad, let alone to a place where I wouldn't be able to readily communicate with the locals (be forewarned about the Scottish accent though!). Fourthly, I am a linguistics major, and the University of Glasgow s English Language and Linguistics department has a good reputation. Lastly, I'd always dreamt of strolling through the Scottish Highlands and visiting its many lochs and isles; in fact, a Rough Guide readers' poll recently named Scotland the most beautiful country on Earth, and after spending a year there, I can see why.

II. Academic Details

The University of Glasgow has a course catalogue like SFU's, which you can access online. When you fill out your online application for the University of Glasgow, you are asked to indicate which courses you want to take; if you are eligible for them, the university will enrol you in them before you arrive in Scotland. If not, final course selection is decided in Glasgow. You must take 60 SCOTCAT credits per semester, which worked out to three 20-credit courses for me. You aren't restricted to just taking courses in your major; I also enrolled myself in some first year electives, including a course called The Archaeology of Scotland, which I really enjoyed, and it included a field trip to different prehistoric and medieval archaeological sites in Scotland.

III. Packing

Whether you go to Uof G in the fall or spring semester or both, you'll want to bring pants, some heavier sweaters, a pair of boots or waterproof shoes, and a rain jacket. Umbrellas invariably invert in the strong Scottish winds, but you can bring one if you want. It doesn't really snow in Glasgow, at least not during the year that I was there, but it can rain a lot and get 77 3587 Tm0 g0 G()]TJETQ0.0000092; t 0.02440

V. Financial Details

of Scotland by yourself. For example, Edinburgh is only a little over an hour away by bus or train; I went there multiple times, including for its Christmas market in late November. If you plan to use the train or bus more than three times each while in Scotland, I would recommend getting the 16-25 Railcard and the National Express Young Persons Coachcard, respectively, which offer discounts on transport tickets.

Both during the month-long spring break and after my exchange program ended, I took advantage of Scotland's proximity to Europe by visiting different countries on the continent. Getting to Ireland from Glasgow is also fast and affordable using Ryanair. Many countries in Europe offer discounts to students for admissions to sites, making it easier to travel as a student on a budget.

Glasgow is never short on events and celebrations to take part in, such as the Bonfire Night fireworks in early November, the St. Andrew's Day parade, Glasgow's Christmas markets, the Burns Night ceilidh on January 25th; and various concerts held throughout the city in January and February as part of the Celtic Connections Festival. Glasgow also has numerous museums, such as the fantastic Kelvingrove Art Callery and Museum, which is free to the public and within a stone's throw of the university. The Mitchell Library, also in Glasgow, houses family history records for those interested in learning about their Scottish ancestry. Go up to the top of The Lighthouse for amazing views of the city centre; attend a free guided walking tour of Glasgow's impressive city chambers; explore the city's botanic gardens, have a picnic in Kelvingrove Park on a sunny afternoon, or find the hairy Highland cows in Pollok Country Park; attend A Play, A Pie, and A Pint at Oran Mor, a lunchtime theatre programme in Glasgow that literally involves watching a play while eating a Scottish pie and drinking a pint; watch a blockbuster at Oneworld Glasgow, the world's tallest cinema; an independent film at Glasgow Film Theatre; or a movie at the retro-designed Grosvenor



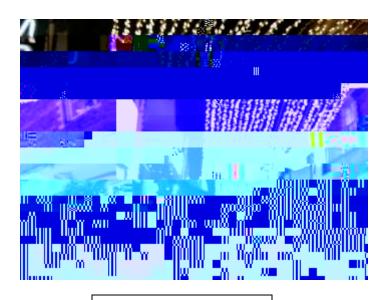
The university at night



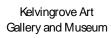
The university at Christmas

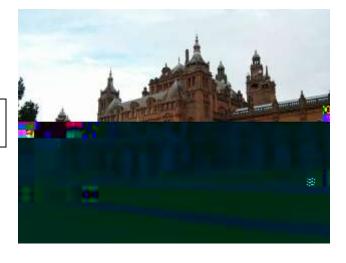


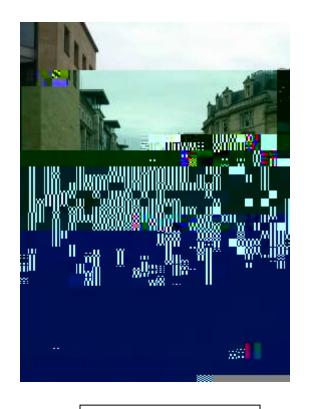
Oran Mor at night



Ashton Lane at night







Buchanan & reet, the main drag in the city centre

Highland cows (aka hairy coos) in Pollok Country Park





View of the city centre from the top of The Lighthouse



View of Glasgow from the top floor of the